

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7133

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: CABINET DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

REF: TEL AVIV 7075

1. SUMMARY: AFTER SOME DELAYS DUE TO BEGIN'S HEALTH AS WELL AS INHERENT RELUCTANCE TO TAKE UP SUCH A POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE ISSUE, THE FIRST PART OF A TWO-SESSION CABINET DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TOOK PLACE ON SUNDAY, JUNE 4. THE DISCUSSION IS TO BE CONCLUDED ON MONDAY, JUNE 12 (SUNDAY IS A JEWISH HOLIDAY, THEREBY NECESSITATING THE NEED FOR A MONDAY CABINET MEETING) AT WHICH TIME THE GOVERNMENT WILL ISSUE ITS REPLY TO THE U.S. QUESTIONS. SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON
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YESTERDAY'S DISCUSSIONS; HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS NOTE THAT DURING THE FIRST SESSION THE CABINET HAS SHOWN ITSELF DIVIDED ON THE FORMULATION OF AN ANSWER AND THAT BEGIN HIMSELF SEEMS INCLINED NOT TO GIVE A CLEAR RESPONSE TO THE AMERICAN QUESTIONS. JUST PRIOR TO CABINET SESSION, MEIR AMIT TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE AND DMC COLLEAGUES WERE DETERMINED TO FIGHT FOR "POSITIVE RESPONSES."

EHRlich WAS MORE CAUTIOUS, BUT AGAIN PREDICTED THAT
OUTCOME "WOULD NOT BE NEGATIVE." END SUMMARY

2. ACCORDING TO THE JERUSALEM POST THE CABINET SPENT
MOST OF ITS TIME DISCUSSING A REPORT BY FOREIGN MINISTER
DAYAN ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE TERRITORIES AND VARIOUS
POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH SPECIAL STRESS ON
THE JORDANIAN ROLE. THE MINISTERS, IN TURN, SOUGHT CLARIFICATIONS
ON THE POINTS RAISED IN THE DOCUMENT. YEDiot
QUOTES BEGIN AS HAVING SAID THAT IN THE FIVE YEAR INTERIM
PERIOD "REALITY WOULD HAVE ITS SAY" AND THAT THIS REALITY
AS IT EMERGES WILL DETERMINE THE BASIS FOR THE DISCUSSION
OF THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE TERRITORIES. THE PRIME MINISTER
REPORTEDLY FEELS THAT ISRAEL HAS MADE NO UNDERTAKING REGARDING
A DISCUSSION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE UP TO THIS TIME
AND THAT NEITHER JORDAN, EGYPT OR ISRAEL HAD SOVEREIGNTY
RIGHTS TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID
THAT A DEFENSIVE WAR, SUCH AS THE SIX-DAY WAR, RESULTS AT
TIMES IN MODIFIED BORDERS. THE MAJORITY OF THE LIKUD CABINET
MEMBERS, HOWEVER, ARE SAID TO HAVE SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF A
CONSTRUCTIVELY FORMULATED REPLY TO THE QUESTIONS, BUT WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ISRAELI 26 POINT AUTONOMY PLAN.

3. THE POST SPECIFICALLY CITES COMMERC MINISTER HURWITZ,
ABSORPTION MINISTER LEVY AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO
LANDAU AS ECHOING THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE INTERIM PERIOD
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SHOULD DETERMINE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE "AUTONOMOUS ENTITY
AND ISRAEL." THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ISRAEL RECOGNIZING
JORDANIAN SOVEREIGNTY. HEALTH MINISTER SHOSTAK DECLARED
THAT THE DISCUSSION WAS OUT OF PLACE AND THAT THERE
WAS NO NEED FOR A REPLY TO THE U.S. FINANCE MINISTER
EHRlich REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT A FORTHCOMING REPLY BE
GIVEN TO THE U.S., BUT THAT HE DID NOT SEE THAT CONCRETE
COMMITMENTS COULD BE MADE AT THIS TIME BY THE ISRAELIS.
THE POST DESCRIBES HIS PART IN THE DISCUSSION AS HARD-
LINE AND SPECULATES THAT IN THE FINAL VOTING HIS VOICE
MAY BECOME PIVOTAL. FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN WAS QUOTED
AS SAYING THAT HE WAS NOT PROPOSING ANY CHANGES IN THE ISRAELI
AUTONOMY PLAN, WHICH CONFORMED TO RESOLUTION 242, AND
THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS HIS OWN IDEAS AT THE NEXT SESSION AFTER
FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. PRESS REPORTS
ALSO NOTE THAT DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN URGED A FORTHCOMING
REPLY TO THE U.S. IN ORDER TO RESTART TALKS WITH THE
EGYPTIANS, BUT THAT HE RESERVED FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE
ISSUES FOR THE NEXT SESSION. HE AND SHARON REPORTEDLY
ARE TRYING TO COORDINATE THEIR POSITIONS WITH BEGIN.

4. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER YADIN AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

AMIT REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO REPLY WITH AN ACCOMMODATING FORMULATION, BUT THAT THE PLANS FOR THE POST-FIVE-YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD MUST INDICATE A CREDIBLE, POSITIVE APPROACH. HOWEVER, THEY, TOO, DID NOT RECOMMEND AN OUTRIGHT AUTONOMY PLAN. THE PRESS SPECULATES THAT FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS OF A DRAFT ANSWER TO THE U.S. WILL BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN BEGIN AND DAYAN DURING THE COMING WEEK, WITH SOME OTHER CABINET MEMBERS TO BE CONSULTED ALONG THE WAY.

5. JUST PRIOR TO CABINET SESSION, MEIR AMIT TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE AND DMC COLLEAGUES WERE DETERMINED TO FIGHT FOR "POSITIVE RESPONSES." EHRLICH WAS MORE CAUTIOUS, BUT AGAIN PREDICTED THAT OUTCOME "WOULD NOT
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BE NEGATIVE."

6. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT LABLOR PARTY LEADER PERES DECLARED THAT HE WOULD CALL FOR A FULL KNESSET DEBATE AS SOON AS THE CABINET CONCLUDES ITS DELIBERATIONS. HE FEARS THAT TIME IS AGAINST ISRAEL AND THAT BEGIN, BECAUSE OF HIS IDEOLOGICAL RIGIDITY, WILL FAIL TO GIVE A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE. THIS SENTIMENT IS ALSO VOICED IN THE LABOR PRESS, SUCH AS DAVAR AND AL HAMISHMAR.
LEWIS

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